(b) whether DRI has also found abnormalities and foul play in documents of the firms as a *prima facie* manipulation of the expiry date and prices; and

(c) if so, whether the above firms are restricted/banned/blacklisted for the time being and not allowed to export ever after lifting of the ban?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Necessary proceedings under the FT(DR) Act, 1992 against the above firms have been initiated.

Head count of religious communities

4473. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Army refused to give information regarding head count of religious communities in armed forces;

(b) if so, what are the reasons cited for refusal; and

(c) whether sharing information will harm the nation in any way?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Armed Forces have a secular and a political character. Recruitment to the Forces is based on merit and is open to every citizen of the country without any discrimination on the basis of their caste, creed, religion or region. All the personnel from all communities and regions work together without any distinction on the basis of caste, creed or religion. Therefore, it was not considered desirable to supply any data relating to particular religious community in respect of the Army as it would have affected the ethos and cohesiveness of the forces.

Status of Defence canteen employees

4474. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the existing Defence canteens and the number of employees in each of these canteens;